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Regional Conference Report

Region 7
Miramichi Community College

Community Non-profit Organizations Secretariat
June 21, 2008

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We were pleased to see such a great turnout at our first of seven Regional Conferences on June 21, 2008 at the Miramichi NB Community College. Both members from the Non-Profit Sector and Government had the chance to meet and network in a casual informal atmosphere. The conference was a wonderful opportunity to bring the sector together, talk, share ideas, and work in a collegial format. The Secretariat was there to listen, to receive feedback from the Sector on the progress to date of actions within *Delivering on the Blueprint* and to begin the revitalization of partnerships within the sector. We look forward to visiting each region of the province within the next several months. For your reference we have compiled the following report, which outlines the Conference, provides answers to the questions asked and highlights concerns raised.

Nicole Smith
Executive Director

Document Outline:

Frequently Asked Questions

- Relationship between Government & the Non-Profit Sector
- Access to Resources
- Funding
- Red Tape Reduction
- Database
- Volunteer Promotion & Recognition
- Financial Questions

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Frequently Asked Questions

Relationship between Government & the Non-Profit Sector

Q. *Is the Secretariat representing all Non-Profit Organizations in New Brunswick?*

A. The Secretariat is there to represent the concerns of all Community Non-Profit Organizations (CNPO), with the exception of Municipalities, Universities, Schools and Hospitals. The Secretariat will strive to present a voice to government on behalf of all CNPOs within New Brunswick.

Q: *How is the structure and opportunity for dialogue going to be organized?*

A: One good opportunity for dialogue between the Non-Profit Sector and Government is going to be the regional conferences. At each conference we will be seeking the Non-Profit Sector's feedback and input on the evaluation forms; these are an opportunity for the sector to let the Secretariat know what it can improve. The Secretariat wants to take our cues from the sector. It is a point of contact for volunteers and the Non-Profit Sector to Government.

Q. *How can someone access the response document? Accessibility has been an issue on this process, how is that going to be done differently?*

A. Both the *Blueprint for Action* and *Delivering on the Blueprint* are available on the web at www.gnb.ca/volunteer. The Secretariat recognizes that not everyone has access/time/resources to print this document. Copies are available at each conference or you may contact the Secretariat office.

Q. *How can the Non-Profit Sector network among themselves and develop partners regionally?*

A. One of the ways that the Secretariat will have a regional presence is through the creation of seven annual regional conferences. There will be representation at these conferences not only from the Non-Profit Sector and Secretariat, but from Government employees. In addition to developing a better relationship with Government this is also an opportunity for the Non-Profit Sector to network and identify how they can partner together.

Q. *In reference to the items referred to the Tax Review Committee - will Non-Profit Organizations be consulted as partners?*

A. In June the government announced that the Select Committee for Tax Review would be holding public hearings across the province. The Deputy Minister, Chris Baker, sat down with chair of the committee, Roly McIntyre to discuss the committee and their role in reviewing recommendations made within the government's response document *Delivering on the Blueprint*. The many organizations that want to comment on the policy itself were welcome to come to the regional meetings and make a presentation before the committee. The opportunity to submit a written brief was also available until August 1st, 2008. The

Secretariat also submitted a letter to the Select Committee outlining the taxations issues raised in the *Blueprint for Action*.

Access to Resources

Q. *Can the Secretariat provide information on Incorporation?*
A. Information on incorporation and a guide to law for non-profits has now been added to the Secretariat's website, and is available on the publications page.

Q. *How can the Non-Profit Sector take advantage of training sessions?*
A. The regional conferences could be in the future a way to provide professional development. There are many people within the sector that have expertise in terms of fundraising, governance, renewal planning, and communications. There is a commitment that the Secretariat is to use the sector as much as possible in terms of sourcing speakers on different topics to provide professional development *What about Government training sessions?* Non-Profit Organizations can currently access training opportunities available to government employees (for a fee) through the Office of Human Resources (OHR). The Secretariat is also working with OHR to determine how the Non-Profit Sector might get access to free sessions.

Q. *How is Government going to prioritize Delivering on the Blueprint and what steps are going to take place? How and when will the non-Profit Sector be notified about the work that has been done on specific recommendations?*
A. The Secretariat will be hosting annual regional conferences in each of the seven regions of the province. It will be reporting on the progress at each conference. The Secretariat will also be providing an annual report to update people on the progress of each recommendation and reporting on the overall progress. The regional conferences are a tool for the Non-Profit Sector to inform the Secretariat of the Non-Profit Sector's priorities.

Q. *What resources/goods are available through the Government?*
A. The Department of Supply and Services does offer volunteer associations and Non-Profit Organizations the opportunity to purchase certain goods that are no longer being used. Non-profit Organizations can get up to $250 worth of surplus furniture and equipment for the nominal sum of $1 every five years. The Department also holds publicly advertised cash and carry sales at various times throughout the year for the disposal of surplus government chattels.

Q. *In relation to the recommendation outlining the use of schools after hours and the use of school buses, is there a target date in place?*
A. The Secretariat will be meeting with the Department of Education to discuss the recommendations in the response that impacts their department directly.

Funding

Q. *Why are only three advocacy groups receiving funding?*

A. Although the Government will not be expanding funding for advocacy groups that deal with provincial issues, it remains committed to maintaining funding for the three advocacy agencies; the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the New Brunswick Advisory Council on Youth and the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons. Further research and discussion will be undertaken by the Secretariat and advocacy groups on this issue.

Q. *What are the criteria for participating in the multi-year funding?*

A. The Government will be taking advantage of the record of performance that already exists. If an organization has received core funding from the Government over the last few years, has demonstrated financial accountability, and has good governance that basically makes the non-profit organization eligible for the multi-year funding agreement. This fiscal year's funding will be used as the basis for negotiating these arrangements. These will need to be done on a department by department basis. The document references a five year funding agreement, however there will be some flexibility as three years may make more sense for some organizations.

Red Tape Reduction

Q. *What is the status on red tape reduction and streamlining grant application process?*

A. Each Deputy Minister has been asked to identify a member of their senior management team who will be the Secretariat's liaison in working on the issues as defined in *Delivering on the Blueprint*. Each Department is reviewing current application forms to simplify the process.

Q. *There needs to be an easier way to submit reports and receive payment through the SEED Program.*

A. The Department of Post-Secondary Education Training and Labour will be evaluating the SEED program in the fall. The Secretariat will be included in the discussions. In turn, the Secretariat will be sure to work with the Non-Profit Sector (via Topic Tables) towards any changes made to the program, and will ensure that the Red Tape Reduction recommendations are taken into consideration.

Q. *Receipt of payments needs to be timelier. What role is the Secretariat playing in this recommendation?*

A. Timely payment and transfer of funds is a recommendation that the Secretariat is currently working on. The use of direct deposit will be promoted to the Non-Profit Sector. For fee for service organizations this would work as well. The Secretariat would also like to see that all Non-Profit Organizations receive their first quarter funding within the first 10 days of the fiscal year.

Database

Q. *Is there going to be a database of Non-Profit Organizations?*

A. This is not outlined in the recommendations; however the Secretariat is developing a database of non-profit organizations currently only accessible to the Secretariat. Many suggested that the Secretariat develop a directory of Non-Profit Organizations that would be accessible to the public. We are reviewing the option of making this information available to the public, and we are discussing the feasibility of creating and keeping something like this up to date. This is an initiative that may already exist in New Brunswick. We will continue to explore this as a possibility.

Volunteer Promotion & Recognition

Q. *Would the Government consider a regional volunteer recognition program?*

A. Currently the Department of Social Development hosts a Volunteer Recognition Awards Ceremony each year. It has been suggested that the Secretariat take over these awards. This is currently being evaluated and the Secretariat is exploring ways in which volunteers could be recognized.

Q. *There is a need to increase awareness and the value of volunteering in the province, especially with an emphasis on youth. How can the Secretariat help?*

A. The need to create more awareness of volunteerism was strongly recommended. The Secretariat is meeting with Communications NB to investigate the possibility of a campaign.

Financial Questions

Q. *Develop a volunteer act or regulation to include liability protection if it does not already exist.*

A. Volunteer protection act is something that is being reviewed by the Secretariat. We are researching similar legislation enacted in other provinces. There are issues of liability to be considered in the creation of an Act.

Q. *What finances have been budgeted to implement Delivering on the Blueprint?*

A. In the current budget, there has been $400,000 allocated for the Community Non-Profit Organizations Secretariat. This money will be used to fund the operations of the Secretariat as follows: Wages for staff; Regional conferences; and office overhead and expenses.

Panel: The Miramichi Perspective on Partnership

René Pelletier, Department of Wellness, Culture & Sport, Regional Consultant

Partnership is just a means to an end. In the Non-Profit Sector, the end product is a healthy community.

René outlined his rules of partnership: 1) accept that you are willing to work together. This is not always easy as someone usually has more clout than someone else. 2) You need to be clear about your objectives and why you are partnering. 3) There needs to be clearly defined roles and responsibilities and 4) everyone needs to be open, transparent and honest. To commit openly you need to be prepared to deal with problems as they arise.

Debbie Churchill, Salvation Army Community Resource Centre, Social Service Coordinator

Organizations partner because together they accomplish more. It is not about the money. Partnership is not a competition for who gets the credit, but who gets the help. It is a joint venture and communication is the number one priority.

To enter into a joint venture, you need a common link and a common need. You need a plan, and you need to evaluate the plan regularly for changes that are necessary and obstacles that you need to overcome. The common goal and mind set of each partner should be on what the greater good is. "My way" doesn't always work in partnerships, there needs to be open communication. Most partnerships fail due to a lack of communication and power struggles.

When the community can see a tangible need, they rise to meet that need. The community needs to partner together on some of the recommendations in the *Blueprint for Action*. The Sector needs to rise up as a community and form a partnership using this plan. Together we can accomplish things that alone we could not do. We need to work together for a common cause and a common goal.

Sherri Allison, Boys & Girls Club / Big Brothers Big Sisters

Sherri outlined that for her, partnerships start with the Board Chair. The quality of that relationship will determine the future of the organization. It is the Board that gives the mandate to the Executive Director. A clear process is needed to build trust in this relationship.

What should you look for in a partner? People with integrity, people you trust and people who are there to get the job done. It is much the same as what we look for in good people. It is important in partnership that what both people bring to the table matches the mission of each partner.

There is a mental health crisis happening in Canada, people are looking for meaning in their life, they want to feel valued. As a sector we have the best

opportunity to fulfill the self-sufficiency agenda – we can make people to feel welcomed, needed, valued.

References:

1. Imagine Canada. *Charity Accountability Movement Well on its Way* http://www.imaginecanada.ca/files/en/pressrelease/code_progress_release_20080619.pdf
2. The Toronto Star, June 19th, 2008. *Charities being held to account* http://www.thestar.com/article/445823
3. Globe & Mail. *Some are born to endless night.* http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20080620.wmhpeter21/BNStory/mentalhealth

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Feedback: Government Directory of Programs & Services

The Secretariat is currently working on compiling all information relating to Government funding programs and services available to the Non-Profit Sector in New Brunswick. At the conference, a sample of some of the information collected was provided and feedback was requested from the participants on how they would like to see this information laid out, what type of information would be of value, what search functions would provide the best result, etc. The following is a compilation of the feedback received:

Maintenance

- It is key that we keep the Directory useful and organized.

Search functions

- Many suggested a search feature. A "key word" search would be a strong benefit (ie. Area of interest; Region)
- Use lay-terms and easy to understand language
- Provide links to more information

Publication

- Mail out the directory for people that don't have access to the internet

Layout

- Use a Table of contents and page numbers
- Categorized by sector (i.e. health, fire fighter, community services, seniors)

Top Priorities

Participants were asked to identify the top priorities in *Delivering on the Blueprint* for them. The following priorities were identified:

- Multi-year funding & retention of surplus

- Access to government resources (buildings, office space, translation, printing services, office furnishings, school buses)
- Relationship building – Developing a true partnership between the Non-Profit Sector and Government
- Training for the volunteer sector (governance, fundraising, pay & benefits)
- Red Tape Reduction (ease and simplification of applications)
- Promotion and retention of volunteers

Website Feedback

The Secretariat is continuing to update its website regularly; www.gnb.ca/volunteer. Since the conference, several items have been added to the Publications and Resources page. Information to assist organizations in starting up, incorporating, and several legal guides are now available.

Please continue to check the website often for updates. Also, the E-news "Be Connected" will be posted on the Publications page.

Resources Available within the Community

Participants were asked to identify resources they might have that others can access. The following was provided:

- Family Education - For families affected by major mental illness, "Strengthening Families Together". Schizophrenia Society of NB - Miramichi Chapter 506-622-1595.

- An upgrading course in academics "Skills Training a New Direction". Schizophrenia Society of NB - Miramichi Chapter 506-622-1595

- Radio Mr Acadie is looking for volunteers. Contact Dominique Clément, Carrefour Beausoleil 627-4527 (or) Marguerite Pitre at Daisy@nbnet.nb.ca 773-8006. All organizations can promote their activities on the radio.

- The NB Youth Centre (through the Department of Public Safety) has a number of resources available for your use. They have a fairly large boardroom; a big meeting room (60-80 people); a gymnasium; a weight room; a computer lab; wood working shop; and crafts area. These are all available for activities with your organization. If you require a place for a meeting or fundraiser they are very much interested in working with you. If you work with adolescent's, they have a number of training sessions available on understanding their issues, how to deal with certain problems or difficulties, and mental issues.

  These facilities are available at no cost to you.

To make arrangements to use the facility you can contact Len Davis at:
Pager: 506-623-1367
Cell: 506-624-4873
Office: 506-624-2087

Needs within the Community

Participants were asked to identify needs they might have that others might be able to assist them with. The following was provided:

- We will need a space (approx 1500 – 2000 sq ft by December 2008). We are hoping there is a provincial/municipal asset that we may take over or share - Autism Resources Miramichi 506-622-8137.
- Part time casual property management for 16 family housing units - Marie Anne Haché, Chatham Non-Profit Housing Inc. 506-778-9562
- Need for space to deliver programs - VON Healthy Baby & Me 506-387-6254
- I need filing done; a student who needs experience would be great. - Girl Guides North Kent 506-622-4041

List of Attendees

Sherri Allison - Big Brothers Big Sisters/ Boys and Girls Club Miramichi
Marion Barrieau - Schizophrenia Society of N.B. - Miramichi
Bill Bastarache - John Howard Society of N.B.
Gisèle Breau - Centre de Ressources Familiales Alnwick Inc.
Peter Budd – Miramichi Ground Search and Rescue
Debbie Churchill- The Salvation Army Community Resource Centre
Wendy Comeau - Friends of Beaubears Island Inc.
Janet Creighton – Schizophrenia Society of N.B. - Miramichi
Denis G. Daigle – Department of Environment
Joanne Daigle – Common Front for Social Justice / Front commun pour la justice sociale
Len Davis – Department of Public Safety
Jeanne d'Arc Doucet - A Family Place Inc. / Le circle familiale inc.
Carol Desrosiers-Godin – Department of Social Development
Jeff Doucet - Miramichi Ground Search & Rescue Inc.
Norma Dubé - Women's Issues Branch – Government of New Brunswick
Lois Dunfield - Voice of Real Poverty Inc.
Greg Ericson - UNB Graduate Student/ Social Capital Researcher
Gary Foley – Miramichi Rotary

Betty Fraser - MPDHA Miramichi Accessible Transit
Rose-Mary Goodridge - Department of Public Safety
Peggy Gorman-Mitchell - District 16 Community School
Marie-Anne Hachey - Chatham Non-Profit Housing
Juanita Hamilton - CMHA Miramichi Branch
Becky Harris – Department of Supply & Services
Brian D.K. Hatch - Department of Natural Resources
Mary-Jane Hickey – Healthy Active Living / Alzheimer Society of Miramichi
Barbara Hinton - Bathurst Heritage Trust Commission
Arnold Kearney - Intergovernmental Affairs – Government of New Brunswick
Eleanor Kingston – Schizophrenia Society of N.B. - Miramichi
Benoit Laroche, Provincial Chief Fire Marshall – Department of Public Safety
Christine Leblanc – VON – Healthy Baby and Me
Maureen LeBlanc - Girl Guides of Canada / Guides du Canada
Beatrice Loggie – Caring & Friends Activity Centre
Debby MacGregor - Autism Resources Miramichi Inc.
Patsy Martin - Schizophrenia Society of N.B. - Miramichi
Bunnie Matheson - Advisory Council on the Status of Women
Jackie Matthews - Advisory Council on the Status of Women
Mike Mersereau - Friends of Beaubears Island Inc.
Patty Michaud - Miramichi Family Violence Partnership Committee
René Pelletier – Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport
Marguerite Pitre – Carrefour Radio Communautaire
Don Russell - Miramichi Youth House Inc.
Sharon Russell - Miramichi Youth House Inc.
Martha Saulnier - Voice of Real Poverty Inc.
René Smith - Miramichi Adult Learning Inc.
Bethany Thorne-Dykstra - Voice of Real Poverty Inc.
Charles Hubbard – Member of Parliament - Miramichi